

# *Sandpiper Shores*

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*Illustrated  
by the author*

*Inspiration from the little sandpiper*

# **SANDPIPER SHORES**

**TROY R. BISHOP**

## THE MAN AND THE SANDPIPER



Once there was a man who wished to find the way to attain his goals. So he prayed to the Almighty for help.

That night the man had a dream in which he was a little sandpiper on a wave-swept shore. As he stepped nimbly in and out with the wave tips, his sandpiper heart beat with a happy wisdom that his human mind had never known.

When the man awoke, he sought out the seashore to study the sandpiper. Returning to his life, he experienced increasing happiness and success.

On occasion the man would return to the seashore to study under the inspiration of the long-legged little sandpiper. Eventually his quest touched upon inner aspects of being.

Gradually the man was imbued with spiritual presence. Compassion flowed from him. Things he touched flourished. And when he laid himself down for his final earthly sleep, his spirit, resembling a little, long-legged bird of purest light, rose in glory into the heavenly shining.

## SPIRIT OF THE SANDPIPER



“**S**ea bird, what can you tell me?” thought the man, watching the sandpiper dance with the ocean.

Salt spray caressed the little bird as it plied its rhythm of advance

and retreat. Cries of sea gulls pierced the air.

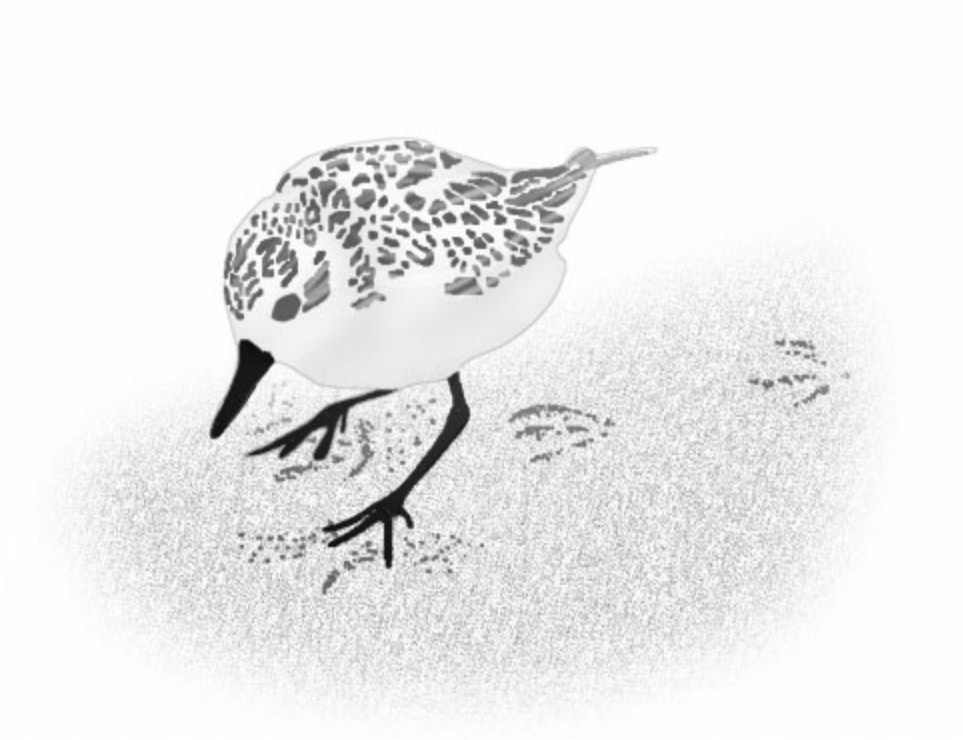
The man's mind went to the frustrations of his life, and he realized that on those painful occasions he had not yielded to oncoming waves but had pursued his goals into the breakers. Why, he wondered, had he not recognized and avoided gathering waves of ire or situation? Why had he thereafter not pursued the dwindling sea edge?

The drama before him stimulated a sudden insight. Gazing at the nimble bird, the man made a vow.

"I will live the spirit of the sandpiper!"

And he went away joyously as the little bird ran happily in the briny wind.

## SANDPIPER TRACKS



“**W**hy does life bring such unhappiness?” thought the man.

And he offered an entreaty upon the wind to the sandpiper running in the wave-swept sand, saying, “Please enlighten and inspire me.”

The man noticed the sandpiper’s tracks. “You step so lightly!” he murmured.

Racing with the waves, the shore bird never paused. Obstacles arose and it veered around them. Immediate goals retreated and it abandoned them for others consistent with its pursuit. Water splashed on its plumage and it shook itself and raced on.

The man thought, "You do not dwell on yourself and thus are not self-important. You are a little, living cork on the ocean of life, bobbing with each wave instead of being broken by it." And he left, saying to himself, "I, too, shall be little and leave light tracks in the sands of life."



## PASSAGE OF THE SANDPIPER



The wind played and the sea danced as the man on the beach watched the sandpiper.

Care marked his face, for he worried about protecting the things he had gained under the guidance of the sandpiper.

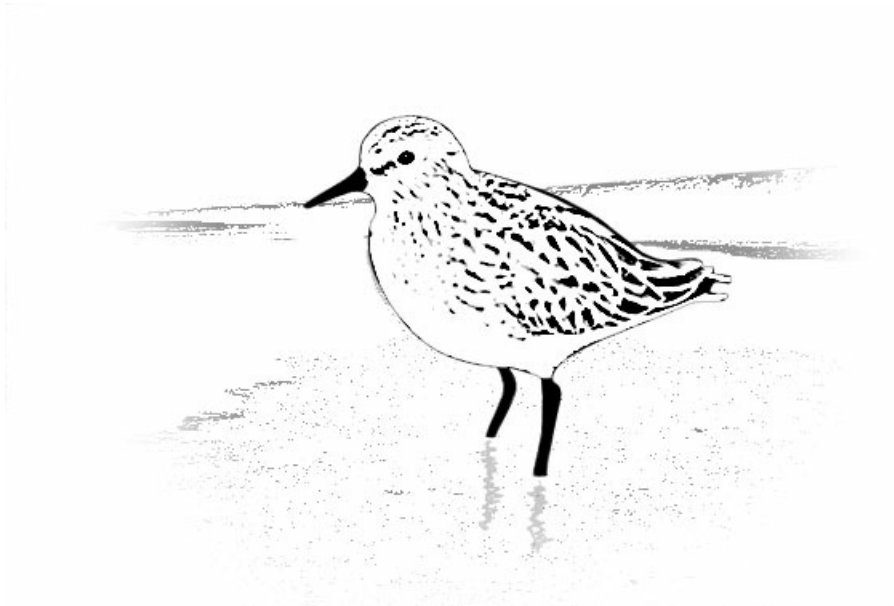
But it was a perfect day, and he surrendered his mind to his heart and to the joy of the moment.

“I love the little shore bird,” mused the man. “Life to it is a single, happy moment. I smile even to watch it in its joy.”

And this message, delivered from his soul to his mind, caused the man to realize that the little sandpiper, in its passage, carried nothing with it very far.

Thus attuned to the insight of his soul, the man smiled and resolved that he, too, would regard his possessions as temporary in his passage through life, releasing each gently when its moment should come.

## THE SANDPIPER'S SECRET



The man contemplated the sandpiper beneath a blue sky. A single, drifting cloud blocked the sun.

“Sea bird,” he thought, “my attainments fail to bring the satisfactions I expected. What is your secret? How do you choose your steps so as to bring joy in the dance of life?”

And the sandpiper’s ceaseless motions spoke to the man and communicated to him that they are only visible expressions of broader, invisible urgings.

And the man realized that goals are not ends in themselves, but means toward overlying values. At that moment the sun burst free.

Thank you, the man whispered toward the little bird.

And he left, resolving to cease the pursuit of goals for their own sake and to begin the search for values on which to base his life.

## THE SANDPIPER'S SHADOW



“**M**y sea bird friend, I am here again,” whispered the man, shading his eyes with his hand as the sandpiper pursued its tasks in the surf.

“It must be that I follow your way imperfectly, for my life

sometimes knows the pain of disappointment.”

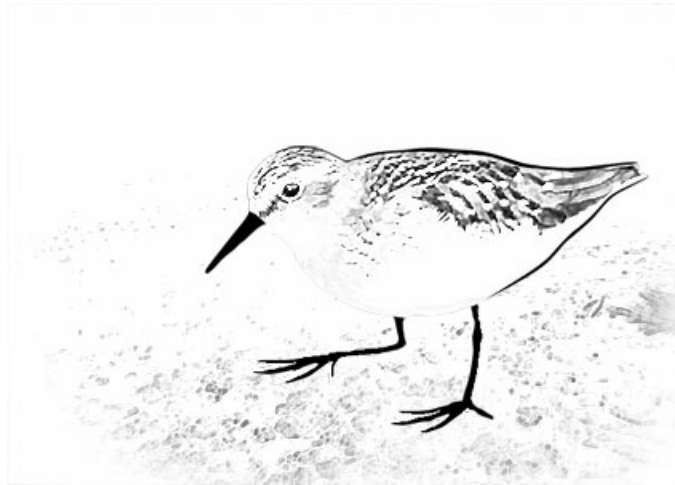
As the sea bird paced, the man’s mind entered into the rhythm of its dance.

The bird’s shadow was like a creature attached to its feet. Always it leapt to meet the sandpiper, intervening in each bouncing contact with the sand.

And the man perceived that values are the foundation of one’s being. Disappointment, he saw, can result from basing one’s life on values unthinkingly accepted from others.

And he rose to go, saying, “Thank you, little friend. From this moment, I shall consciously examine and choose each value upon which I shall build my life.”

## ROCK OF THE SANDPIPER



The man watched the sandpiper as it pursued its age-old tasks at the junction of the sea and the shore.

“I select my values carefully, as the sea bird taught me,” he thought, “but still, values that seem promising fail me as time goes by.”

Following the swift motions of the sandpiper, the man noticed how the little bird’s feet pressed surely against the sandy terrain. It was as if the surf bird ran on an invisible floor of rock that did not change as did the flowing sand and sea.

“Of course!” the man exclaimed. “The sandpiper does not know disappointment because its deeper motivation, which supports its

being, never changes!”

And as the sea and wind sang, the man reached for the rock of his own being, vowing that he would base his life on changeless values.



## HEART OF THE SANDPIPER



The seashore trembled in the surf as the sandpiper raced the waves.

The little feathery runner seemed to ride the wind. Nothing disappointed it. Its frame never sagged. Its pace never slowed. “If only,” thought the watching man, “I could pledge myself so unreservedly to something. Like the sea bird, I would then be possessed of the endless energies of a valiant heart.”

And in that moment the man knew that he could give such commitment only to values that are truly worthy. Thus, in the longing itself, was he given the gift of purpose.

And the man arose and left with the commitment to discover and embrace values worthy of such loyalty. And his heart brimmed with expectation.

## CIRCLE OF THE SANDPIPER



The man's mouth moved silently as he gazed at the sandpiper in its pursuit of the slipping waves.

"Each answer in my search for values seems to lead to more questions," he whispered. "Conflicts between values. Inconsistencies."

The man engrossed himself in the running sandpiper.

And he perceived a unity over the motions of the little bird. Thus he realized that one's values must themselves be unified in higher values, in an ascending harmony of values that are ultimately unified in one supreme value. One must inhabit a circle of values.

The sky smiled upon the man as he vowed to discover and

pledge himself to his one supreme value, in which all his other values would be unified.

And the man's heart spoke to him, saying that if he were only sincere, his quest would surely be successful.

## SANDPIPER YEARNINGS



The man contemplated the sandpiper beneath the azure sky, his thoughts going to the changes in his life.

Existence had gained new promise with his commitment to higher values, inspired by the sandpiper.

“Thank you, little friend,” he murmured toward the racing bird.

The sea bird skimmed along sand and surf, full of the moment, and the man thought to himself, “I wonder what happy yearnings you

feel. Would that mine were so joyous.”

At that moment a door opened within the man and he experienced wondrous joy. Beauties of being spoke to him through the purity of his heart, telling him of what could be.

And the man left, his heart singing with the sand and the sea and the sky of purest blue.

## THE SANDPIPER SPEAKS



“If you could speak, little friend, what would you say to me?” thought the man, as the sandpiper ran nimbly at the sea’s edge.

“And what would your language be?” Salt spray wet the little bird’s feathers as it raced the waves.

A sudden cloud blocked the sun, darkening the seashore. In the hush, the man perceived a realization so intense that all sense of time and place left him.

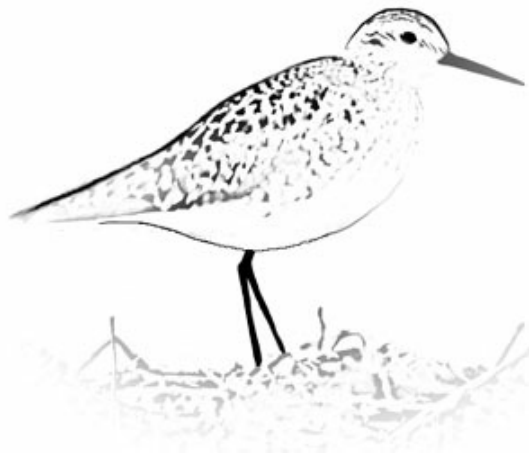
And he heard a Voice in his mind and soul, saying, “The

sandpiper speaks with My Voice, my child, as do all things. You will speak My Words with increasing perfection, through your thoughts, longings, and deeds.”

And the man sat long with his head bowed and thought about what had happened to him.



## SANDPIPER DESTINY



**A**s the sandpiper went about its work, the man pondered.

“How fully,” he thought, “have I opened myself up to your influence!”

And the man noted that the sandpiper’s small, pattering footsteps were like his own heartbeat.

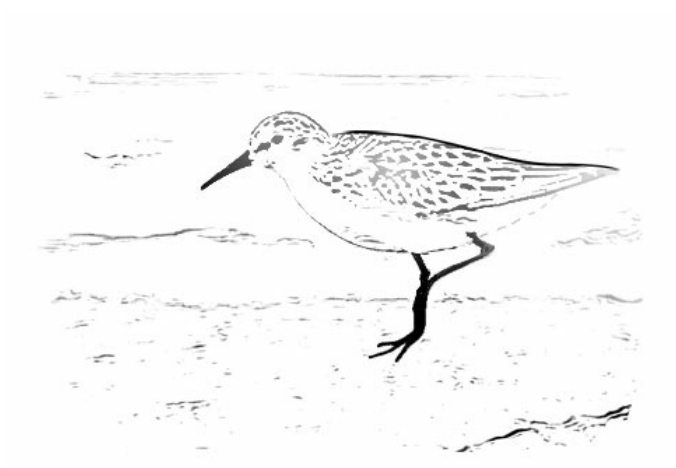
“Where, though, will those footsteps lead?” he wondered.

And in the clarity of the moment the man saw that values have no existence of their own, but are extensions of living mind and spirit. They live as one gives them life. And he looked even beyond eternal

values to the Presence which upholds them and made a commitment.

And the man knew that from that moment, he would forever live a relevancy above all limitation. And he bowed his head in quiet gratitude.

## SANDPIPER CERTITUDE



“How confident is the sandpiper!” thought the man, as he watched the moving figure.

In effortless fluidity the bird ran and turned, serene in the unfolding of each wave. Circumstance itself seemed coordinated about the bouncing little bird.

“I am like that!” exclaimed the man in sudden insight. “Somewhere in my heart, I know that I have always possessed the certitude of the sandpiper.”

As the fullness of the man’s heart opened to his own gaze, he perceived how deeply he had always believed in a universe of ultimate

benevolence and love.

And the man saw that it is the possession of this faith that enables one to function at spiritual levels. And glad thankfulness filled his heart.

## SANDPIPER VISION



“Such a happy little one!” exclaimed the man, as he watched the sandpiper at its ballet.

“I have, in my world, at least the same measure of happiness that you have in yours.” And he smiled. As the man uttered these words, he suddenly understood that one’s belief is the only limitation to the reality to which one can attain.

“It is true,” he murmured. “What one sees is ultimately what one gets.”

And the man thought of the persons who believe in a purposeless universe, empty of God and value and continuing existence. And he realized that they ultimately inherit that empty

nonexistence in which they believe.

And seeing the equity in such freedom of choosing, the man was happy and gave thanks, for he chose to be a spiritual child of the Infinite and Loving Father of All.

## SANDPIPER TURNINGS



“S Sandpiper, how do you select your ceaseless turnings?” wondered the man, as the bird darted along the sand.

“Your view is tiny, and the waves loom high!”

As he watched the bird dance with the sea, the man came to

understand that one follows that which is higher not by rules or formulas, but through inner faculties.

And he saw that when viewed from within the billowing plane of mutating human reality, the changeless Infinite appears to shift confusingly.

But one can, the man realized, follow the leading of the Infinite through faith, love, and wisdom.

“Mine is to request divine guidance and then in trust follow as best I can, without doubt or worry,” he whispered. “All else is Thine.” And he left with a singing heart.



## THE SANDPIPER BRIDGE



The sun hung low as the man watched the sandpiper at its endless pursuit in the surf.

Contentment soaked his soul. What better place to stay than at this place of insight and beauty. As the breeze brushed the man's skin, his attention went to the sandy surface upon which the sea bird paced. With every lapping wave, the terrain altered its shape.

The man considered the flow of being which propels humanity in

its course. He saw how all things, family, friends, situation, even cities and nations, rise up, then fade and depart.

And the man realized that in the journey of life, one can carry only what one has built within oneself.

“This world,” he thought, “is only a bridge. I may pass over, but I cannot remain upon it.”

## THE SANDPIPER AND THE GREATER SHORE



Peace enveloped the seashore as the man contemplated the sandpiper making its busy rounds.

Under the guidance of the little bird, the man had found meaning and purpose. His heart brimmed with contentment. Trust permeated his soul. Allegiance to the One motivated his being. High resolve fortified his actions. Cultivated wisdom guided his deeds.

As the man pondered, the petals of his soul opened. Above him, a pelican soared through a blue sky dappled with fluffy white. Waves sang and zephyrs danced. Everything existed and moved just so.

Together.

The man's eyes were opened to the universal unity, and he saw the Hand of God.

In soul-felt awareness, he sensed the greater shore beneath all things, where already his feet were walking.

And he gave himself over to the blessed moment.

## THE SHINING SANDPIPER



“**S**andpiper,” thought the man, as he watched the racing bird, “you have guided my insights and my heart to the Infinite.”

He looked toward the boundless sky, the vast sea, and back to the shore runner.

“Can you help me find my service?”

As the bird sped across the glittering film of water, its scattered reflections seemed to be a shining sandpiper which did not pick up food, but invisibly put sustenance down for other sandpipers.

And the man said, “I, too, shall be a shining sandpiper and walk

unseen, placing out food for those who seek.”

As he left, a shining presence hovered over him laying out bright things for him to find.

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